

MEDIA ADVISORY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GODDARD DEMANDS REFUND OR FREE REPLACEMENT OF ALL SECOND CHANCE BULLET PROOF VESTS CONTAINING ZYLON®

(Phoenix, Arizona—November 20, 2003) On June 24, 2003, a police officer in Forrest Hills, Pennsylvania was seriously injured when a .40 caliber bullet passed through a bulletproof vest manufactured by Second Chance Body Armor, Inc., which contained a material known as "Zylon®." The vest was six months old and was warranted to last five years. The bullet is still lodged in the officer's abdomen.

In the wake of these and other events, in September 2003, Second Chance informed its customers that it had discontinued its "Ultima®" and "Ultimax®" Zylon vests "because it is possible the vests could wear out sooner than expected under certain conditions" and the company had discovered what it claimed to be an "unexpected decrease in the ZYLON® fiber strength." According to a statement issued by Second Chance President and CEO Paul Banducci, there is no way for a customer to tell whether a particular vest has been affected "without ballistic tests that destroy the armor."

Although Second Chance has offered its Ultima® and Ultimax® customers a choice between free "upgrades" to the vests (called "Performance Packs") and price "credits" on replacement vests prices, Attorney General Goddard today called the offer "completely inadequate." Goddard demanded that Second Chance immediately offer all Arizona law enforcement officers either a full refund or free non-Zylon® replacement vests for all Zylon® vests sold. "The performance packs," said Goddard, "are not only cumbersome, they have not been adequately tested." While the replacement vests are offered at a discount, "this ignores the fact that the individuals who purchased the vests never got the protection they paid for in the first place. That they were not killed or seriously injured is purely a matter of grace."

Although several companies manufacture body armor containing Zylon, Goddard said he is aware of no failures of Zylon vests other than those manufactured by Second Chance. "We have, however, seen published aging tests of Zylon fiber which cause us great concern, since the degradation in strength corresponds to high temperatures and humidity, both of which exist in Arizona." While the specific composition of body armor using Zylon varies from manufacturer to manufacturer, Goddard said "we call upon all manufacturers to test their vests carefully and resolve any questions on the side of officer safety."

While General Goddard criticized Second Chance's replacement program, he strongly urged all officers in the State to "continue wearing their vests" until adequate replacements are obtained. "Law enforcement officers who do not wear body armor increase the risk of being killed in the line of duty" Goddard said. "Any bulletproof vest is better than none."

